



# Jewels of Japan

Classic Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 1

Tokyo – Mount Fuji – Mishima – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Himeji – Osaka

See the classic sights of Japan, visiting modern Tokyo, iconic Mount Fuji and historic Kyoto. A visit to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Museum and the holy island of Miyajima complete this fascinating tour.

- Discover the delights of vibrant Tokyo
- Admire breath-taking Mount Fuji
- Make your own Japanese soba noodles
- Experience the speedy bullet train
- Explore Japan's history In Kyoto

## TOUR MAP

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## JEWELS OF JAPAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

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- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## CLASSIC TOURS:

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These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Southeast Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

‘Jewels of Japan’ falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rests. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches, trains, and boats. You'll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Please Consider:

- Sightseeing may often involve walking for a reasonable duration, sometimes over multiple steps, or uneven surfaces.
- Boarding and alighting from various boat sizes independently is part of the experience.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 12 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia. Please note, some flights may depart and arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to [info@wendywutours.com.au](mailto:info@wendywutours.com.au) so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo (arrive into either Tokyo Narita or Tokyo Haneda airport) and end the tour on Day 11 in Osaka (departures from either Osaka Kansai or Osaka Itami airport). Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- **Please note:** Edo Tokyo Museum is undergoing renovation. The visit will be replaced by a visit to Tokyo National Museum.



**DETAILED ITINERARY****Day 1-2: Tokyo**

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel.

Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant.



You will be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel. Transfers will differ depending on group size

**Destination Information**

**Tokyo** – One of the world’s most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

**Day 3: Discover Tokyo**

Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you’ll find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore.

Pass by the Imperial Palace en route to the Tokyo National Museum. *(Please note: The Tokyo National Museum is closed on most Mondays. If your group's visit falls on a Monday, you will visit the Museum when it reopens on Tuesday).* Next, head to the old district of Asakusa and



soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji, Tokyo’s oldest and most famous temple, before browsing the stalls on Nakamise Shopping Street. Due to the limited coach parking, you may need to walk around 15 minutes on flat but busy road to reach the temple area. Later, head to the Tokyo Skytree and ascend to the observation deck for panoramic views over the city.

You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo.

### Destination Information

**Imperial Palace East Garden** – The Imperial Palace Garden is part of the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. Built on the original site of Edo Castle, the Plaza is made up of a palace, museum and large park.

**Tokyo National Museum** – Located in Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum is Japan's oldest museum. Here you'll find the world's largest collection of Japanese art, including ancient pottery, Buddhist sculptures, samurai swords, colourful woodblock print's, eloquent kimonos and much, much more.

**Sensoji Temple** – Sensoji Temple is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

**Tokyo Skytree** – The tallest structure in Japan, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake-resistant. It offers wonderful views over the vast metropolis of Tokyo.

### Day 4: Meiji Shrine

Meals: B, L, D

Spend This morning, explore the classical landscapes of the Hamarikyu Gardens, then drive to the Shibuya district to visit the Meiji Jingu Shrine, located in a peaceful green forest within the city. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your hotel, driving by the Shibuya Scramble Crossing en route!



Return to your hotel, where your guide will let you know what time to meet for this evening's dinner cruise. In the meantime, you are at leisure to explore independently or relax in the hotel. Transfer from the hotel to your boat and take a leisurely dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas.

*Please note that throughout your time in Japan, some temples, restaurants and other venues, including the dinner cruise, may require you to remove your shoes before entering. Bare feet are not considered respectful. Therefore, it is recommended that you carry spare socks in your day bag during your trip. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.*

### Destination Information

**Hamarikyu Gardens** – Hamarikyu Gardens is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

**Meiji Shrine** – Built in 1920, Meiji Jingu Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shōken. It was completed eight years after the emperor's passing. The Meiji period in Japan brought modernisation and industrialisation, leading the country to join the world's major powers.

**Day 5: Mount Fuji & Five Lakes**

Meals: B, L, D

*Please note that the opening times of certain sites around Mount Fuji can vary dramatically, and some flexibility may be required. For example, some sites are weather-dependent, while other sites may change their opening hours regularly, sometimes with no notice. You may find that your excursions for today and tomorrow will be swapped over to accommodate this. Please listen to your guide for the latest information.*



Journey 2 hours through the foothills of the iconic Mount Fuji to its base, where you will find the Fuji Five Lakes. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone.

Head up Fuji's 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas.

*Please note it is only possible to reach the 5th station if weather permits. If the 5th Station is closed, the group will visit Fujisan World Heritage Centre instead.*

After lunch, visit the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum to view the elaborate dyed silk creations before exploring the Iyashi no Sato historical village, located on the western shores of Lake Saiko, famous for its thatched-roofed houses. Transfer around 1 hour to Mishima and check into your hotel and make use of the onsen facilities.

**Destination Information**

**Fuji Five Lakes** – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

**Mount Fuji** – At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

**Itchiku Kubota Art Museum** – Kubota Itchiku revived the lost art of Tsujigahana silk dyeing, used to decorate elaborate kimono during the Muromachi Period (1333-1573). The museum exhibits several of his kimono creations, while the extensive gardens, designed by Kubota Itchiku himself, are also worth a stroll.

**Iyashi no Sato Historical Village** – Iyashi no Sato is a replica village based on a former farming village which was destroyed by a landslide in 1966. The houses here have traditional thatched roofs.

**Day 6: Bullet Train to Kyoto**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer around 45 minutes to Oshino Hakkai, a scenic area of ponds full of crystal-clear spring water created by Fuji's melting snow.

Stroll around the area before trying your hand at making traditional Japanese soba noodles, which you will then tuck into for lunch.



Drive around 2 hours to Mishima Station to board a 2-hour bullet train to Kyoto. An enchanting city, Kyoto was capital for a thousand years; today it is the legacy of ancient Japan, full of tranquil temples, silk-clad geisha and sublime gardens. Check in to your hotel and have dinner at a local restaurant.

*Please note that your luggage will be transferred separately to your hotel in Kyoto and arrive later the same day.*

*For May departures only: Instead of visiting the Iyashi no Sato historical village, a visit to the Fuji Shibazakura Festival has been included. This is the best time of the year and one of the most scenic places in Japan to see the pink moss phlox in full bloom. Please note that the flowers' bloom is weather dependant.*

**Destination Information**

**Oshino Hakkai** – Oshino Hakkai is a set of eight ponds in Oshino, a small village in the Fuji Five Lake region, located on the site of a former sixth lake that dried out several hundred years ago.

**Kyoto** – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

**Day 7: Explore Kyoto**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a full day tour of Kyoto, starting with a visit to the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the temple.

Next, immerse yourself in the culture, learning the traditional Japanese handicraft of origami and enjoying the art of a tea ceremony. After lunch, visit a traditional teahouse where you will be joined by a Tea Master. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue.





Continue to Fushimi Inari Shrine, slightly outside the city centre. Here, thousands of red torii gates frame picturesque paths that snake up the hill to the main shrine. Please note that due to limited coach parking space, you may be required to walk for 15 minutes from the coach to the beginning of the torii gates, including stone steps and a gentle hill.

### Destination Information

**Kiyomizu Temple** – Kiyomizu Temple is a 16th century Buddhist Temple in Kyoto. A highlight is the Hondo's veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

**Origami** – Origami is the traditional Japanese craft of paper folding without glue or cutting. This colourful tradition is regarded a skilled art form in Japan and can be good fun to try.

**Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha)** – An important Shinto shrine dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. There are many fox statues in the grounds of the shrine, as foxes are thought to be Inari's messengers. Fushimi Inari is famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates, which form a network of tunnels around the main shrine buildings. For hundreds of years, believers have donated torii gates as a plea for a wish to come true, or out of gratitude for a wish that has been granted.

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### Day 8: Kyoto & Hiroshima

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a visit to Ryoanji Temple, home to Japan's most famous Zen garden, and Kinkakuji Temple, the 'Golden Pavilion', famous for its impressive gold-leaf facade.



You will be on your feet for approximately 2-3 hours this morning. You will need to remove your shoes at Ryoan-ji Temple.

After lunch, transfer to the train station and take the bullet train to Hiroshima, a journey of approximately two hours. A modern and prosperous city, Hiroshima will be forever remembered as the world's first atomic bomb target.

*You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately to your Hiroshima hotel for the following day.*

### Destination Information

**Ryoanji Temple** – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles. The garden has fifteen stones, cleverly arranged so that one rock is always hidden from view at any angle. Fifteen is considered the number of perfection; just as no individual is perfect, viewers are unable to see all the stones. It is a reminder of one's imperfect and limited perspective.



**Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)** – This Zen Buddhist temple sits over a 'mirror pond' in a classical garden of the 'go round' style. The top two floors are covered in pure gold leaf. The temple is an excellent example of the Japanese design principle of 'shakkei', meaning borrowed scenery, which connects the building with its wider setting.

**Hiroshima** – An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and the city's name became famous worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes and destroyed sites of historical heritage were reconstructed.

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**Day 9: Hiroshima & Miyajima**

Meals: B, L, D

Hop on the ferry to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the island's charming, shop-lined streets at leisure.



Return by ferry and then coach to Hiroshima for lunch. Later, visit Orizuru Tower and the famous Peace Memorial Park and Museum.

Please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park.

You will be on your feet for approximately 4-5 hours today.

### Destination Information

**Miyajima** – Miyajima is a small island less than 1 hour outside Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, Japanese for 'Shrine Island', because of its well-known main attraction, Itsukushima Shrine, a giant torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

**Peace Memorial Park and Museum** – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is one of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, the area of what is now the Peace Memorial Park was the political and commercial heart of the city and this is why it was chosen as the pilot's target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6 and the subsequent outcome for the residents.

**Orizuru Tower** - The 50-metre-tall Orizuru Tower is located beside the A-Bomb Dome and is one of the few tall buildings around the Peace Memorial Park. It offers a great view of the surroundings, including the less commonly seen view of the A-Bomb Dome from above.

**Day 10: Himeji Castle**

Meals: B, L, D

Travel 3.5 hours by coach to Himeji, with a rest stop along the way. On arrival, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the beautiful Himeji Castle and neighbouring Koko-en Garden. Later, transfer approximately 2 hours to Osaka for your overnight stay.

Himeji Castle is largely in its original condition, so please be mindful of your step when walking around. You will have to remove your shoes before entering, and there are steep wooden staircases between floors. You will be on your feet for 3-3.5 hours during the visit.



Himeji Castle is visited by incredible numbers of visitors each year. As such, they now issue numbered tickets on arrival to enter the Main Keep in order to limit visitors, reduce congestion and protect this heritage property. Please note there may be rare cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep; however, there are other parts of the castle to explore.

*Please note: There will be a substantial amount of walking today, including a large number of steps.*

**Destination Information**

**Himeji** – Himeji is the second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. It is most famous for its magnificent castle.

**Himeji Castle** – The largest castle in Japan, Himeji is also widely considered Japan's most beautiful castle. It is one of the best-preserved original castles in Japan, having never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire. Though fortifications began in the 1400s, the castle as it survives today was completed in 1609. Floors are largely unfurnished. Guests who choose to visit the topmost (sixth) floor can peer out over the roofs and see the layout of the castle below. See if you can spot the fish decorations on the roof, which are believed to protect the castle from fire.

**Day 11-12: Depart Osaka**

Meals: B

This morning is free at leisure before you transfer to Osaka airport for your return flight home arriving home today or the following day.

*Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Jewels of Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.*

*Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.*

**PLEASE INFORM OUR RESERVATIONS TEAM OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.**

## JEWELS OF JAPAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia. Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days.

### INSURANCE:

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We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

### EATING IN JAPAN:

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All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive classic group tours, from dinner on the group's arrival until breakfast the day of departure. On all Group tours, Extensions and Pre & Post Stays, no refund will be given for any meals missed due to your flight timings, or personal choice.

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our Classic group tours from dinner on the day arrival until the morning of departure.

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks - practising is advised, as Western cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet-style. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is often buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes.

All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in your home country.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

It is imperative that you clearly communicate any and all dietary needs when booking, and don't forget to reaffirm them during your welcome briefing with your tour guide. However, it is crucial to understand that local restaurants might face limitations in accommodating specific dietary requests, particularly in the cases of gluten-free, celiac, or vegan requirements. Please bear in mind that finding gluten-free options may not be as effortless as it is in Australia. Regrettably, we cannot assure that the food served will be entirely free from allergens.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Japan. We recommend that when it comes to Japanese food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. In the Fuji area, hotels tend to be more traditional in style and culture. In this area, you may be asked to take your shoes off at the door and store them in a secure locker – this is very traditional Japanese culture. Please note, double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed; twin beds are more common in Asia

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Japan.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

### **PORTERAGE:**

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Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.



## TRANSFERS:

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As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, passengers will arrive/depart in Japan at various times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/ departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/ airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred all the way to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients).
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk).
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

On the departure day, all passengers will be met by English-speaking staff at the hotel and transfer by one of the three ways above. For those passengers using a shared bus or shared bus plus taxi to the airport, the guide services end when they drop you off at the bus stop, and you will need to check in at the airport on your own. If you have paid extra for a private transfer, the above does not apply.

You will meet your national escort at the welcome dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting. Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you. If at any stage you are unable to locate your representative, please contact our Japan ground operator on the number included in your final documents.

## TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia. Coaches and mini buses do not have onboard toilet facilities, however frequent bathroom stops are made for passengers comfort.

**Bullet trains:** Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases (1 case per person). You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

## DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN:

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Japan is a developed country and as such matches the West in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

### GROUP SIZE:

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

### CULTURAL DIFFERENCE:

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Japanese society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs.

Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (and some restaurants). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of spare socks, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed. Socks with grip are useful at sites like castles with steep wooden steps.

In shops, there is a small coin tray at the till. This is where you should place your money and collect any change, rather than handing it directly to the assistant. If the card machine is behind the desk, do the same with your card.

Shaking hands is not typical in Japan. Instead, stand and bow slightly (about 15 degrees) from the waist. Do not put your hands together prayer-style as in some other Asian countries.

Two essential phrases: Please = Kudasai. Thank you: Arigatou or Arigatou gozaimasu.

### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

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If you are travelling within the below Japan public holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed. Coach, air and train travel may also be affected. Tourist attractions will be open; but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, which will start Golden Week which then runs from 29th April – 5th May 2024, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May, and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd February every year.

### **SOUVENIRS:**

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

### **LUGGAGE:**

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### **PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:**

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Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AU\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. US Dollars and Australian Dollars can be exchanged at Narita Airport and in some hotels, provided the Australian currency is new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be very limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

### **CLIMBING STEPS:**

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Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails.

Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: Mar 2025